Examining and Assessing Your Community Policing: A Self-Assessment Tool

COPS — Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

CALIBER an ICF International Company — Caliber, an ICF International Company

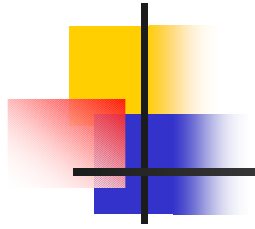**POLICE EXECUTIVE RESEARCH FORUM** — Police Executive Research Forum

Presentation Overview

- Seeing the need
- Introduction to the tool and its development process
- Practical Value and Relevance
- Tool usability and applications from a local LEA perspective
- Key questions

Seeing the Need

Project Goal

To develop a valid, reliable, and user-friendly tool that can be used to objectively assess community policing implementation.

Purpose of the Tool

- Operationalize community policing philosophy
- Evaluate community policing implementation
- Document the organizational changes that support community policing
- Facilitate internal planning
- Inform training and management objectives toward the implementation of community policing

Purpose of the Tool

- Improve definitional integrity of community policing
- Operationalize community policing philosophy
- Fill a void by creating an assessment model
- Closer to establishing behavioral norms for police and community policing

Tool Content and Development

Goals of Tool Development

- Meet scientific standards for rigor

- Receive wide acceptance by the policing field

- The tool needs to be user-friendly

- Allow departments to implement the tool cost-effectively with little to no outside assistance
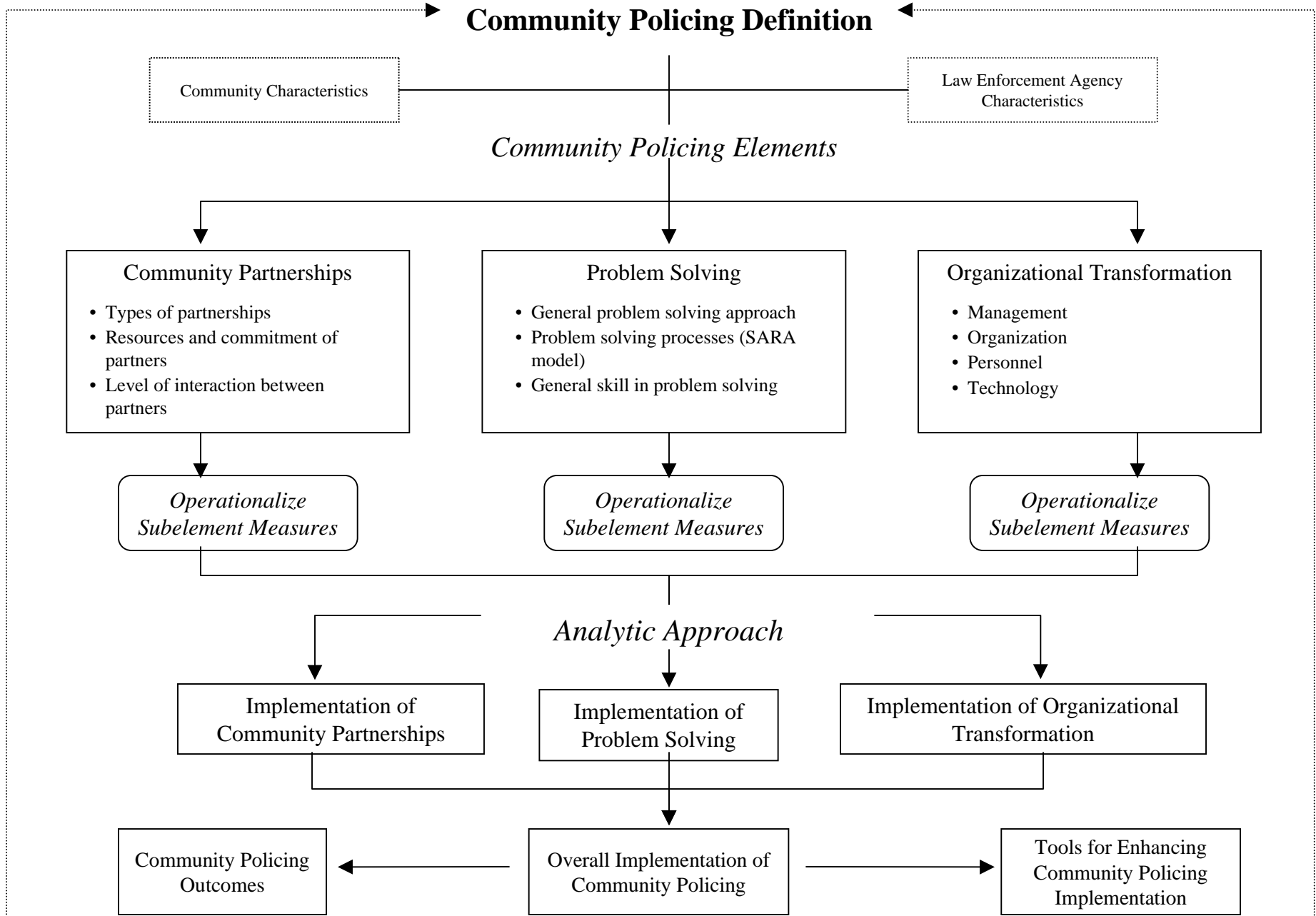
Assumptions of the Tool

- Acceptance of the basic principles of the community policing framework

- Implementation can be measured for all sizes and types of police agencies

- The tool will assess the journey rather than simply the destination
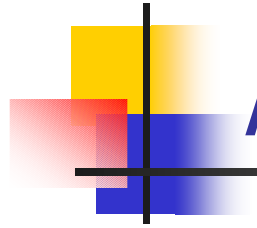
Aspects of Development

- The instrument is being developed based on the current and historical literature.

- We are using an inclusive and transparent process to receive input and guidance from practitioners and researchers (within and outside the project Technical Advisory Group).

Framework for Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool

Community Policing Definition

Community Characteristics

Law Enforcement Agency Characteristics

Community Policing Elements

Community Partnerships

- Types of partnerships
- Resources and commitment of partners
- Level of interaction between partners

Problem Solving

- General problem solving approach
- Problem solving processes (SARA model)
- General skill in problem solving

Organizational Transformation

- Management
- Organization
- Personnel
- Technology

Operationalize Subelement Measures

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Analytic Approach

Implementation of Community Partnerships

Implementation of Problem Solving

Implementation of Organizational Transformation

Community Policing Outcomes

Overall Implementation of Community Policing

Tools for Enhancing Community Policing Implementation

Framework for Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool

Community Policing Definition

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Community Policing Elements

Community Partnerships

Collaborative partnerships between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations that serve or include anyone with a stake in the community.

- Agency has multidisicplinary partnerships with indicated community partners, including other government agencies, non-profit and community groups, businesses, the media, and individuals.

- Existing partnerships have bring appropriate resources and level of commitment to community policing activities.

- Level of interaction between law enforcement agency and community partners: communication, coordination, or collaboration.

Problem Solving

The process and effect of problem solving should be assessed at each stage of the problem solving process.

- General Problem Solving Approach
- Problem Solving Processes
  - Scanning
  - Analysis
  - Response
  - Assessment
- General Skill in Problem Solving

Organizational Transformation

- Agency management
  - Leadership
  - Decision-making
  - Planning and Policies
  - Organizational evaluations
  - Agency Accountability
  - Transparency
- Organizational structure
  - Geographic assignment of officers
  - Despecialization
  - Flatten organizational structure
  - Resources and finances
- Personnel
  - Recruitment, hiring and selection
  - Personnel evaluation and supervision
  - Training
- Technology/information systems
  - Communication/Access to Data
  - Quality and Accuracy of Data

What the Tool Will Be …

- A user-friendly *organizational assessment* tool to answer the question: How well has our agency implemented CP in the areas of organizational transformation, problem solving, and community partnerships?

- Confirmatory approach to measuring CP - We start with a model/vision of CP and then ask departments to collect data on whether they are implementing elements of the model/vision. Next, we confirm the fit between the department's approach and the model/vision.

- Our model/vision of CP is one that almost all department's will readily identify with and see as meaningful.

What the Tool Will <u>Not</u> Be ...

- The tool will not be an *impact assessment* tool to answer the question: How effective have our efforts to implement CP been in solving problems and delivering superior police service to the community?

- However, where appropriate impacts (e.g., using existing community survey data, complaint data, etc.) should be incorporated into your assessment efforts to fully understand how CP activities relate to those impacts.

Data Sources

- Use of multiple data sources
  - Police personnel, community leaders, archival records, observations
- Quantitative data
  - Surveys, extant police and community records, observational data
- Qualitative data
- Structured focus groups with officers, managers, and community members

Tool Development Process

- Updated existing literature on frameworks, protocols, and assessment
- Conducted multiple focus groups
  - IACP conference, RCPIs, National Sheriff's Association
  - Wrote a report on focus groups
- Technical Advisory Group input
  - Practitioners, academics, and a research methodologist
- Produced a CP framework & explanatory document and purpose document

Tool Development Process

- Initial assessment tool developed and piloted in Appleton, WI
- Based on pilot testing feedback, the tool was significantly revised
- The revised tool is being piloted in five additional communities and also rated by recognized experts in the field
- Reliability and validity testing
- Development of User's Guide

Practical Value and Relevance

Practical Value of the Tool

- Evaluate community policing implementation
- Document the organizational changes that support community policing
- Facilitate internal planning
- Support External Reporting of Progress/Performance

Practical Value of the Tool

- Inform training and management objectives toward the implementation of community policing
- Promote accountability for effective service
- Encourage transparency to community

The Appleton (WI) Experience
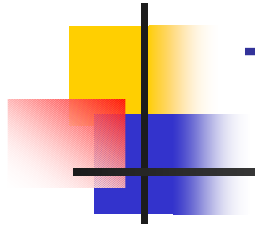
The Appleton Experience

- Asked to be the first agency to be a pilot site for the Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool

- Dual role of assessing the agency community policing progress plus assessing the survey tool

- Focus groups, interviews, and surveys provided input and resulted in major modifications to the survey instrument
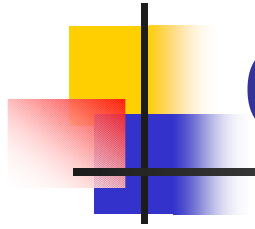
Why Appleton?

- Support of Chief
- Long history of community policing and partnerships
- CALEA Accredited
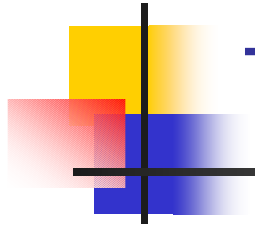
Tips for Success

- Engage bargaining units
- Allow employees time
- Deal with confidentiality concerns
- Involve someone with organization authority
- Involve civilians on cross-agency teams
- Define terms in advance
- Have everyone participate

Organizational Risks

- Understand objectives
- Assess current organizational dynamics
- Be prepared for conclusions that are different than beginning assumptions
- Be prepared that you may not like what you see

Cross Agency Teams

- Provided an opportunity for civilian staff to provide input

- The "outside" members brought a healthy and fresh perspective

- The diverse makeup of members provided a more complete picture of the agency
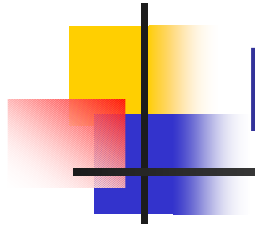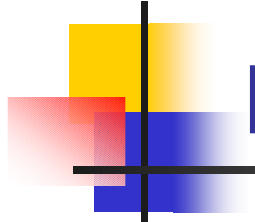
Lessons Learned for Appleton

- We do not all share a common language
- Weak on documentation of problem solving efforts
- Strong on responses but sometimes weak on analysis and assessment
- Lack of crime analyst and old records management system makes scanning and analysis difficult
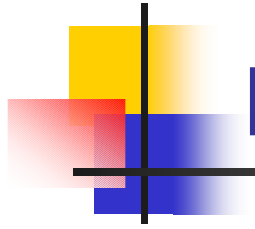- Different levels of awareness of partnerships

Key Questions

Key Questions

- Can we create an all-inclusive self-assessment tool?

- Would you partner with a local college or university to assist in conducting the assessments?

- Are there existing efforts that you could incorporate into this type of assessment process?

Key Questions

- What are the risks, and are there ways to mitigate them?

- Are there other ways you can envision using this tool?

- How much of an investment would you be willing to make to conduct the self-assessment?

- What would you do with the findings?